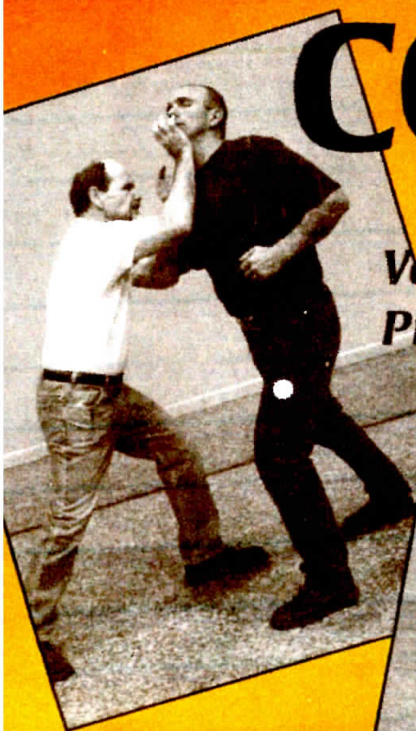
Bob Kasper's

INDIVIDUAL CLOSE COMBAT



Volume I: Principles and Tactics



Volume II: Stance and Movement

Bob Kasper

Foreword by Kelly McCann

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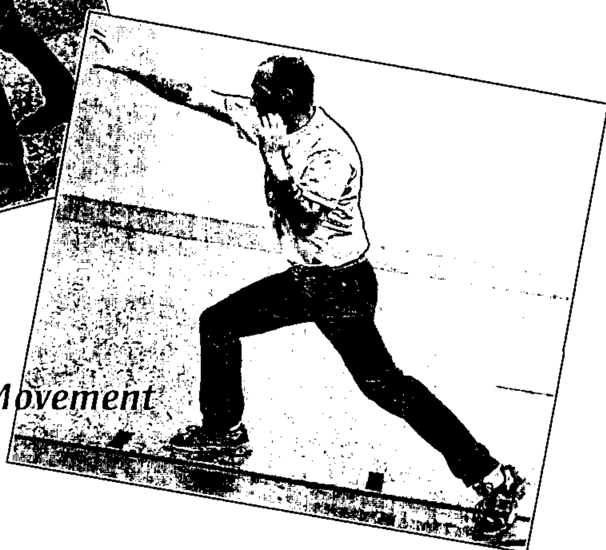
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Principles and Tactics



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PALADIN PRESS • BOULDER, COLORADO

Bob Kasper's Individual Close Combat
Volume I: Principles and Tactics
Volume II: Stance and Movement
by Bob Kasper

ISBN 13: 978-1-58160-685-0
Printed in the United States of America

Published by Paladin Press, a division of
Paladin Enterprises, Inc.
Gunbarrel Tech Center
7077 Winchester Circle
Boulder, Colorado 80301 USA
+1.303.443.7250

Direct inquiries and/or orders to the above address.

Visit our website at www.paladin-press.com

Volume I is dedicated to the memory of
Dr. Gordon Eric Perrigard, the "Doc."

Volume II is dedicated to the memory of
William Ewart Fairbairn and Eric Anthony Sykes.

WARNING

The techniques, tactics, and principles depicted in this book are extremely dangerous and can lead to severe injury and death. The author and publisher disclaim any liability from any damage or injuries that a user of this book may suffer, as well as any liability from any danger or injuries to third parties from the user of this book. This book is *for informational purposes only.*

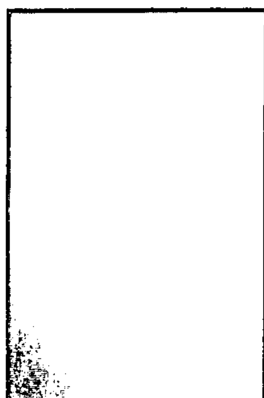


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FOREWORD

Bob Kasper. Former Marine. Writer. Combatives instructor. Security contractor. Many people in the United States and other countries around the globe know his name. Perhaps they read his column in *Tactical Knives* or communicated with him by phone or on various combatives and knife forums. Relatively few had the opportunity to train with him firsthand.

I met Bob in the early 1990s when I read an advertisement in *Black Belt* magazine. The ad included the Gung-Ho insignia used by World War II Marine Raiders (the Chinese characters mean "working together" or "teamwork"). As a former Marine deeply involved in Combatives training for both military and government personnel, my interest was piqued. The ad read simply "Attention Marines!" and went on to invite any former or current Marine to contact the organization in order to help "keep our tradition alive" by training in World War II close combat.

Some of the techniques I teach are derived from World War II combatives, so I called the number and Bob answered. He was soft-spoken and told me about the organization, and I told him about myself and my organization. We agreed to meet the following week in Brick, New Jersey, to work out. And we did.

Skeptical when I saw the ad, my skepticism evaporated when we worked out. I was impressed with Bob, his gang of practitioners, and their training methodology. Like my own group (Personal Defensive Measures) his group (Personal Combative Techniques) focused on training *with* each other not training *subordinates*. At the conclusion of those first three days, Bob and the "Board" of the Gung-Ho Chuan Association (GHCA) named me a Master Instructor, and the Virginia chapter of the GHCA was formed. Our curriculum differed somewhat from Bob's curriculum, and John Kary's "American Combatives" curriculum taught in New York differed from both of ours, but the best thing, the most important thing, was that the men in our respective groups were brothers in banging. I simply don't know of any other group that trained so hard, at near real-time speed and power on each other.

The day I drove back to Virginia I called my wife and said, "After all these years of feeling like a martial outlaw, I think I finally found a place to be." It was great.

Over the years I learned that Bob was a fantastic organizer. He enjoyed process without formality. He was a powerful combatant, an exceptional knife designer, a fast and brutal "knifist."

After our relationship began, he saw an opportunity to change his lifestyle; he gave up his job at a major pharmaceutical manufacturer and started teaching combatives, writing for *Tactical Knives* and doing some security contracting when he could.

As a former Marine, he was disciplined. He had deep martial arts roots, held senior ranks, and understood Japanese martial arts but never yielded application of Western ways to Eastern philosophy. He was networked well with Carl Cestari (both having trained with Charlie Nelson back in the day as friends) and knew personally (or of) virtually all significant combatives experts.

Bob had been a three-time cancer survivor when we met—which was remarkable. He had learned to live every day as if it might be his last. His love of motorcycles and motorcycling, for example, was a corner post of his life. He loved the camaraderie found in intense groups and stayed involved in many.

Bob's journey in combatives brought him (near the end of his life) to "Arwrology"—the collective techniques assembled by Dr. Gordon Perrigard (Canadian) in World War II. He was the heir of Arwrology from Perrigard and, in true Bob style, it became important for him to keep this element of World War II combatives alive. Some of this influence appears in this book.

Despite encouragement, prodding, and suggestion, Bob was reluctant to produce either video training products or books. A very private person, he wrote prolifically on Combatives and knife training but never released any of that writing. A perfectionist, he edited, re-edited, and reorganized these writings until finally, a year or so before his death, he told his wife, Pat, "I think I'm ready to publish."

An insidious disease, cancer. It finally caught up with Bob, and everyone who knew him was saddened and shocked to learn it had attacked his brain. When I saw Bob to pay my respects before he passed, I was overcome with who he was, what he had accomplished, and how much of his life he had dedicated to the pursuit of pure combatives.

We who knew him well are all fortunate to have run with Bob. Those who didn't are still fortunate to be able to have this book in their combatives collection. A book written by a private man who had forgotten more about combatives than most people will ever know.

—Kelly McCann

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special thanks to Pat for her continuous support and for editing this series of books.

Thank you also to my brothers, the Gutter Fighters of The Gym in New Jersey, for their dedication to our kind of fighting.

Thanks also to GHCA Senior instructors John Watson ("Mr. Black") and John Devenny ("Mr. White") for being the meat puppets for Volume I, and John Watson ("Mr. Black") and Fred Bauer ("Mr. Gray") for Volume II.

Volume I



Principles and Tactics

CHAPTER 1

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF CLOSE COMBAT

"This action is simple, but it must be fast, automatic, a conditioned reflex. When fighting fiercely for your life, you have not got much time to think and the more automatic movements and reactions you have prepared for your defence, the safer the result will be."

—Dr. Gordon E. Perrigard, 1943

When you find yourself in a violent attack situation, there are certain principles to which you should adhere. To make things as simple and as easy to understand and retain as possible, I have placed these principles into five categories that can be identified by the acronym SCOPE. The five categories are as follows:

Simplicity
Control
Offense
Power
Effectiveness

SIMPLICITY

Simplicity in close combat can be defined as keeping the techniques as basic and simple as is practically possi-

ble, with one technique flowing into the next without any excessive movement.

Studies done during World War II showed that when a person is put into an extremely high-stress situation, they tend to lose all fine motor skills, develop tunnel vision, and experience auditory exclusion. With these in mind, we have to wonder if complex body movements are really practical for violent attacks. If the answer is no, then we must remove these fine-motor-skill techniques from our close-combat curriculum.

When a violent attack occurs, you will not have time to think about what to do. Your body will react instinctively with what is most familiar. And what it will be most familiar with is what it has been practicing the most. Therefore, it is not advantageous to learn 100 different techniques for 100 different self-defense scenarios. A handful of basic techniques that become second nature is far superior to a truckload that have to be thought about. Remember that it is better to know 10 techniques at 100 percent efficiency than 100 techniques at 10 percent efficiency. Training with excessive numbers of moves will just become confusing to the individual who is learning these techniques. A violent confrontation is not the time to stand around trying to figure out what to do. The body must react swiftly and decisively. This can only be achieved by the constant drilling of simple, basic techniques.

CONTROL

The main objective of any violent confrontation, whether on the street or the battlefield, is to gain and maintain complete control of the situation.

An assailant's goal is to get control of his victim. Once this is accomplished, he can do anything he wants with

him. Our goal should be to reverse that situation and to do so as soon as possible. The longer the assailant has control, the better the chances of your losing it forever.

How do we gain control? Simple—you must become everything your assailant is and much, much more so. If he is aggressive, you must become more aggressive. If he is ruthless, you must become more ruthless. If he is animalistic, you must become more animalistic. These miscreants who prey on the weak and innocent don't understand begging, pleading, and reasoning. They actually feed their egos off those things. What they do understand is what they are: violent. And violent is what you have to be to survive their assault.

OFFENSE

Once you have made the decision to defend yourself, you must immediately go on the offensive.

Take a good look at the results of the battles that this country has been involved in, and you will you find that they were won by offense. A good example of this would be the Pacific theater of World War II. The Japanese were dug into their strongholds, ready to defend themselves and the property they occupied. The Marines hit the beaches and kept driving forward with a merciless offensive attack that defeated the enemy on island after island. The Marines hit them hard, fast, and continuously until they fell under our offensive onslaught. This has been a Marine Corps tactic since its inception. When attacked, go on the attack. Put the offenders on the defense and keep them there until they are no longer a threat.

When attacked by an assailant who is out to harm you, don't try to defend yourself. Go immediately on the offensive. Remember, in close combat there is no such thing as

defense. There is only attack and counterattack. When involved in a violent situation, you are literally at war with the enemy. War calls for extreme measures. After all, the bottom line is your life. Therefore, when it's time to defend, go immediately on the offensive and stay on the offensive until your assailant loses his will to continue the assault.

POWER

Execute each technique with all the explosive power you can muster and keep executing them until the assailant is under your control.

Why does the sport of boxing have weight classes? Simply because of the power a heavier man possesses. A heavier man is at an advantage to knock out a lighter opponent. Of course, there are other factors involved, such as speed, conditioning, skill, and will. But even with these factors thrown in, it's usually power that decides the final outcome. It's the power blows that take a toll on a boxer. It's the power blows that put the opponent down and out for the count. And it's the power blows that we should be employing in our close-combat techniques.

Trying to wear an opponent down for the final blow is asking for trouble. What you're actually doing by playing pit-a-pat is giving him opportunity after opportunity to counterattack and defeat you. Once again, you want to hit him hard, fast, and continuously until he is no longer a threat. Striking vital areas as hard and fast as you can hit them is the only sure way to a successful defense.

EFFECTIVENESS

Only use techniques that have been proven effective in close combat.

The violent confrontation is not the time and place for experimentation. You better be sure that the techniques you are using are effective. The best way to be sure is by using only those methods that have already been tested on the streets and battlefields.

We live in a very good age for learning effective combative techniques. The hard, dangerous work has already been done for us. Those who already have experimented, and were successful, have passed these techniques down to us. It is up to us whether we want to take that step of faith and believe these techniques to be true, or practice something else and have doubts about the ability to defend ourselves.

Is there a guarantee that these techniques will work every time? No. Assaults are never exactly the same. Each time there will be different factors involved. No one can predict exactly how, when, where, and under what conditions someone will be attacked. That is why it is of the utmost importance to understand the basic principles of close combat and to be ready to implement them at any given time.

By keeping your techniques basic and simple, immediately going on the offense to gain and maintain control, and employing battlefield-proven techniques as fast and hard as you can deliver them, your chances of surviving a violent attack will dramatically increase.

CHAPTER 2

AGGRESSIVE ATTITUDE

Finding yourself in the middle of a violent situation is a frightening experience. No matter how much you train to counter an assault, nothing you do can mentally prepare you for a surprise attack. Startled and confused, you automatically shift into a self-preservation mode. You reel back and cover in a desperate attempt to stop any further pain and injury. You are on the defense. At this moment the assailant has started the process of achieving his goal of total mental and physical control of his victim. There is only one way of stopping this process: "counteraggressiveness."

When I say counteraggressiveness I do not mean countering the enemy's aggressive behavior. What I mean is countering his aggressiveness with your own aggressiveness. Development of this principle does not lie within the scope of this book. It is an attitudinal condition that is developed according to how you approach those areas of training.

The victim has two options when facing a violent attack: to protect himself (defense) or to counterattack

(offense). By taking the first option, you are inviting the assailant to continue his assault, which can result in pain, injury, or, worse yet, death. Not good! So it seems that the only logical answer is option number two, to counterattack. With an aggressive counterattack, you will be better able to stop an assailant's aggression.

An example of these options can be found in the case of the Long Island Railroad gunman. The gunman (I refuse to put this animal's name in print) decided to kill innocent commuters as they were traveling home from a day's work. As the passengers were in a state of relaxation, waiting to reach their destinations, this animal reaches into his gym bag, pulls out a 9mm automatic, and starts firing into the heads of these unsuspecting commuters. When he had emptied his gun, he sat down, reloaded the magazine, and started shooting again. As the animal's rain of terror continued, the passengers instinctively tried to protect themselves by crawling under the seats of the car. How long would this assault have continued? Obviously until the gunman ran out of ammunition. The slaughter only stopped when a couple of men grabbed the gunman, brought him down to the floor, and took his handgun away. Because the victims took an attitude of counteraggressiveness, the maiming and killing did stop.

Attitude is the behavior of a person toward a situation or a cause. Aggressiveness is an attitude. Because aggressiveness is a behavioral trait, the degree of intensity varies from one individual to the next. Some people are naturally aggressive, while others are very passive. For those who are naturally aggressive, training with this attitude comes very easily. On the other hand, those who are more passive in nature need to work harder at developing an aggressive attitude.

As a behavioral trait, aggressive development lies within the mind. When training in the execution of individual techniques, you need to approach your equipment as more than just equipment. For example, when you are practicing nontelegraphing edge-hand blows from a natural position, what exactly are you striking? Is it a Muay Thai forearm pad, or is it a dirtbag trying to intimidate you? Is it a focus mitt, or is it some miscreant getting in your face? Are you just hitting training equipment, or are you visualizing that training equipment as something else—or should I say someone else?

The mind is powerful. Early in my close-combat training I would visualize violent encounters to the point of getting an adrenal rush. This takes a lot of concentration, but it can be done. I'm not telling you to reach that point during training; it is not necessary. I'm just giving an example of how powerful a training tool the mind can be. When standing in front of impact equipment, visualize it as someone who is going to harm you. Say to yourself, "I'm going to take him out with this shot. I'm going to drop him." Get mad, get violent, and get ruthlessly aggressive. Hit fast, hit hard, and hit first. Scream as you smash that edge-hand into his throat. Pour every ounce of energy into that initial strike. Take him out! If you approach your training like a street encounter, you won't approach a street encounter like you are in training.

Another point I'd like to mention is repetitious training. High repetitions are great for beginners. It is through constant repetition that you develop proper execution of technique and instinctive movement. There are no shortcuts. But once the technique becomes instinctive, once it becomes a part of our muscle memory group, once it becomes us—it is time to move on. Tell someone to practice edge-hands on a heavy bag and observe his method. The

person will usually tap the bag to get his range and then commence to strike at low to medium power. After about a dozen strikes, he is blasting away at full throttle. Is this what happens on the street? Are you going to tap your assailant to find your range and then hit him lightly until you're warmed up? I don't think so. So why are you training like that? If someone knows that he is going to do high repetitions, he isn't going to put 100 percent speed, power, or aggressiveness into each technique. He is going to pace himself. Pacing is good for competition, not combat. Instead of doing high repetitions, try this. Do only five repetitions per technique/per side. Do not warm up and make the first strike the most violent. Visualize the equipment as an assailant, and counter with an aggressive pre-emptive attack. Not only will this enhance your execution of technique, but it will change your attitude toward training. It is this type of training that helps to develop an aggressive attitude.

So far I have been talking about aggressiveness in your *execution* of technique. Now let's take a look at how to translate this attitude to your *application* of technique. When someone is assaulting you, he is demonstrating aggressive behavior. He is using using his aggressiveness to take control of his victim. You must reverse this action immediately. The only way to do this is by counteraggressiveness. With ruthless aggression, you must immediately counterattack by taking the offensive. This is the only way to stop aggression and break contact. Your objective at the moment of attack is to take and maintain control of the situation. If the enemy knows he can control you, he will continue to control you. But if he finds he is being hurt in the process, he may change his mind. You must counter his aggressiveness with your own aggressiveness. You must attack and keep on attacking until the threat is over. Don't stop until you are in complete control. Even if the assailant

is better than you, he will most likely not continue if he knows he is going to have a fight on his hands. No one likes pain. It hurts. Therefore, make him hurt. Better yet, make him unconscious.

"There is only one principle of war and that's this: hit the other fellow as quick as you can, and as hard as you can, where it hurts him most, when he ain't lookin'!"

—Sir William Slim, 1956

CHAPTER 3

MODES OF ATTACK

So how do we use counteraggressiveness in our application training? First let's look at what *not* to do. When I studied traditional karate, we did one-step, three-step, and multistep sparring drills. For those of you who have been fortunate enough not to have studied traditional karate, they are blocking and countering drills. The opponent either attacks once, thrice, or multiple times, and then you counterattack. In other words, you wait for the opponent to finish his steps so you can counter with some of your own. This develops a passive-defensive mind-set—exactly the opposite of what we want to do. Our goal should be to develop an aggressive-offensive mind-set. Never train to block, block, block, block, and counter. Your training should consist of pre-emptive striking, stop-hits, and cover-explode counterattacks. Pre-emptive striking is when you initiate the attack. You feel something is about to happen and you attack immediately, striking the assailant before he moves (Figures 1-1 and 1-2). A stop-hit is when you antici-

pate an assault and attack the assailant as he launches his attack. The goal here is to stop his attack by hitting him first (Figures 1-3 and 1-4). Cover-explode is when the assailant has already launched a surprise attack. You fold into a guard (cover), then explode in his face with a ruthless-aggressive counter attack. Have your training partner launch a full focus hook punch to your head. Fold into the guard and immediately counter-attack with an all-out offensive assault (Figures 1-5 through 1-7). Totally dominate his senses with your aggressive attitude. Yell, scream, growl, attack! Become the attacker, not the victim.

Remember that close combat is 10 percent technique and 90 percent attitude. The next time you practice, don't approach your training with a passive-defensive mind-set. Look at your equipment and training partner as an aggressive, violent miscreant who is hell bent on your destruction. And the next time you counter, you won't just counterattack. You'll counter with attitude.

STOP-HIT

Pre-Emptive Strike

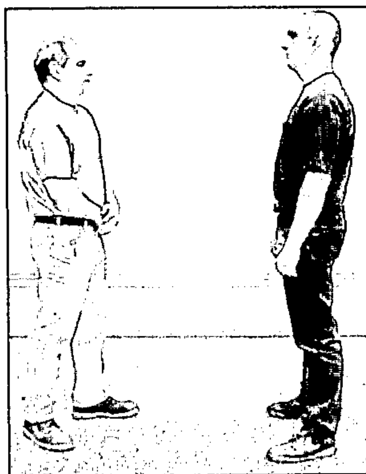


FIGURE 1-1
Mr. White prepares to execute a pre-emptive trike.



FIGURE 1-2
In one nontelegraphic move, the strike hits its mark.

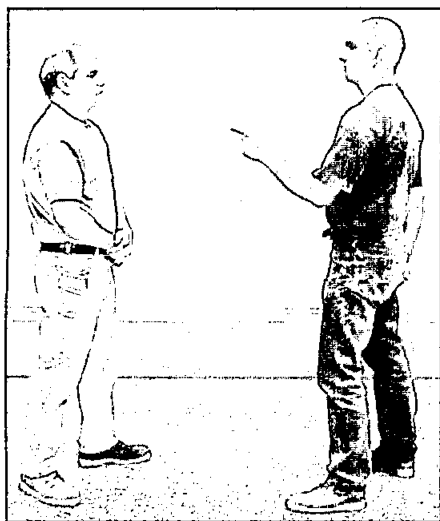


FIGURE 1-3
Mr. White prepares to execute a pre-emptive strike.

Cover and Explode



FIGURE 1-4
Mr. Black moves first, but Mr. White counters with a stop-hit.



FIGURE 1-5
Mr. White is preoccupied in another direction.



FIGURE 1-6
Mr. Black launches his attack, and Mr. White covers.



FIGURE 1-7
Mr. White immediately follows with an explosive counterattack.

CHAPTER 4

PRINCIPLES OF POWER

One principle that I feel needs to be emphasized is power. No matter how fast or aggressive you are, if you do not possess power in your execution of technique, you're not going to stop your assailant. Executing simple, effective techniques will all be in vain unless there is a substantial amount of juice behind those techniques. Peter Robins, a noted close-combat instructor from England says, "The first thing to do in a violent encounter is to take away the intention." Hit them hard enough, and they'll completely forget why they were even there. The following are five principles of power development that I use whenever I teach a technique. Follow these and make your first strike the last.

A few years ago my instructors had the assignment to come up with an acronym for the five principles of power

development. My senior instructor, John Watson, came up with SWAMP:

Stay relaxed
Weapon first
Acceleration
Move in the direction of the strike
Plunge your body weight into the technique

STAY RELAXED

Of all the power principles this is probably the hardest to develop. I'm not advocating staying relaxed when someone is all over you trying to end your breathing habits. It is learning to use your body at maximum proficiency. Staying relaxed is essential for your body to move swiftly and economically. Explosive movement doesn't come from stiff, tense muscles. You need to stay loose. The key word here is *concentration*. Concentrate on being relaxed before you explode into the technique. You'll find your movements much more dynamic.

WEAPON FIRST

This is another one of those hard-to-develop techniques. We want to throw the weapon first so as to not telegraph our intentions. Let your opponent feel the technique before he sees it. This is most important when executing a pre-emptive strike, which should be 100 percent of the time if possible. Although follow-up strikes do tend to be a little more difficult when moving the weapon first, this is no reason not to try. Following this principle as often as possible will make your technique delivery much faster and more powerful.

ACCELERATION

Acceleration is simply speed. Once you move, do so as fast as your body can and don't stop until the action is over. This is most important on that initial strike. Here we go back to the first principle of staying relaxed. Tense muscles move more slowly. Stay relaxed and throw that strike as fast as possible and the results will speak for themselves. When good friend and fellow close-combat instructor Kelly McCann cooks off on someone, the individuals are always amazed at how much power he generates for his weight. At 150 pounds, McCann doesn't seem large enough to develop that much power, but because he moves explosively, he does. When you throw a technique, throw it fast. Accelerate, and keep accelerating until it's over.

MOVE IN THE DIRECTION OF THE STRIKE

Probably the best example of not moving in the direction of the strike is seen in karate training. Stepping backward while blocking and striking is common in traditional form training. That's not what you want to do. Learning to move in the direction of the strike is easy. Just follow the path of the weapon and let your body move in on that same path. You body should be turning into edge-hands as well as moving upward with chin jabs. You can't move mass into a blow when that same mass is moving in a different direction. Fast mass is power.

PLUNGE YOUR BODY WEIGHT INTO THE TECHNIQUE

To do this, you must be applying two other principles: moving the weapon first and moving in the direction of the

strike. If you're not moving the weapon first, your body is going to move and set before the strike lands, which results in your weight settling before the weapon strikes. No mass, no power. If you're not moving in the direction of the strike, there is no mass there to plunge. Plunging means throwing all your body weight directly into the strike before your mass settles.

Each of these principles supports the other. Take one away and you'll have a dramatic loss in explosive power. This is especially important in nontelegraphing, pre-emptive strikes. New practitioners have a tendency to want to wind a technique up to get as much power as possible. That's good! But if you're telegraphing your initial strike, all the power in the world isn't going to help when you're on your ass in a daze. The key to pre-emptive is delivering explosive power when your opponent is not expecting it. And the only way to do that is to follow the SWAMP principles (Figures 1-8 through 1-10).

As practitioners we want to repeat these principles prior to each power development session. Let them sink in until they become second nature. We want to watch for missing principles. Is my weight landing after the strike hits, or is it landing before the strike? Am I turning my body into the strike, or am I still, or moving away? Are both of my legs moving with my body, or am I leaving my leg lagging behind? Am I loose and moving smoothly, or tense and choppy? Is my weapon moving first, or is my hip, leg, arm, torso, etc. moving first? Question, detect, analyze, and correct.

Webster's defines SWAMP as "overwhelm." This is exactly what we want to do. Overwhelm the enemy.



FIGURE 1-8
Mr. White strikes with a tiger claw to demonstrate the principles of power development.



FIGURE 1-9
Weapon moves first at maximum speed.



FIGURE 1-10
Body follows weapon into target. Weight is plunged in behind the weapon.

CHAPTER 5

CIRCLE OF DEFENSE

The circle of defense (COD) can be best defined as the perimeter around our body made by the maximum effective striking distance with the weapon at hand. The key words here are "maximum effective striking distance." You can strike someone from a great distance, but be beyond the point of effectiveness. This is why impact training is so important. Impact drills train the body for speed and target acquisition while developing full-body power. They tell you when you're at your limits of effectiveness.

When I say weapon at hand, I mean whatever your weapon is at the time of engagement. It could be a hand, foot, knife, or club. Each weapon has different reach parameters, and it is very important to know them. For instance, the difference in maximum effectiveness between a chin jab and a tiger claw is about 12 inches. The same holds true for a knife. The COD for a snap cut is drastically different than that for a power thrust.



FIGURE 1-11
Mr. White demonstrates his circle of defense for a tiger claw strike.

If you know a threat exists, you don't wait until it is in your face. When it reaches your COD, attack and keep on attacking until the threat no longer exists. I was involved in an incident where a man came at me with what (to me) was obviously bad intent. I felt the threat, and as he entered my COD I edge-handed him in the throat. He dropped, and I exited. I didn't even have to think about what to do. My years of pre-emptive striking with SWAMP power at my COD took over (Figure 1-11).

CHAPTER 6

PRIMARY TARGETS

Primary targets are those areas of the opponent's body that are designated as targets for attack. The primary target areas—the eyes, throat, groin, foot, and knees—are those points of the body that are the number-one choice to assault. These targets, when struck properly, will put an opponent out of the fight very quickly. However, to experience the full potential of striking primary targets, the correct weapon must be used.

The following study is for maximizing the effect of primary target attacks. Be mindful that close combat is extremely lively in action, and the ideal target does not always present itself. No matter; you should still attack with full power and aggression in the primary vicinity.

EYES

The eyes are considered the number-one primary target for two reasons. First, the ideal natural weapon to use to

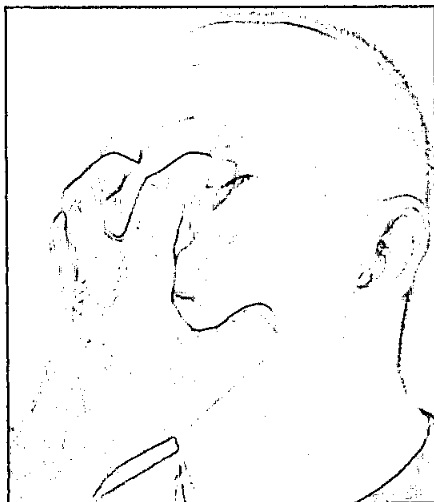


FIGURE 1-12
A tiger claw strike to the eyes.

the eye is the tiger claw (Figure 1-12), because it is the fastest and longest-reaching hand strike in the close-combat arsenal. Second, it takes a minimum amount of pressure to the eye to cause extreme discomfort. The striking point on the eye is directly to the pupil. The angle of attack is straight in with a horizontal strike, perpendicular to the bulb. The result of a focused strike to this target can range from watering of the eye and discomfort, severe trauma and pain, unconsciousness, temporary or permanent blindness, to loss of the eye itself.

THROAT

The throat is a primary target because, when it is struck properly, the assailant will have extreme difficulty in breathing. This will take his mind off what he was doing, or stop him completely. The striking point on the throat is the carotid sinus. The weapon of choice will greatly depend on



FIGURE 1-13
The throat under an edge-hand attack.

the position of the opponent's body. For instance, if he is lying on his back the weapon may be the heel of the foot with a stomp kick. The ideal hand weapon is the edge-hand (Figure 1-13). The angle of attack is straight in on a horizontal plane, perpendicular to the target. The results of a focused strike can include choking, extreme difficulty in breathing, unconsciousness, and internal bleeding, which can cause death by asphyxiation.

FORK

For obvious reasons, the fork (groin/testicles) is a primary target in close combat. The reason is the same as for the eyes. It can be reached by the fastest and longest weapon in close combat's foot arsenal, which is the foot spike using the toe of the shoe as the main weapon. The knee spike for up-close, in-your-face combat is also an excellent weapon (Figure 1-14). As with the eyes, minimum



FIGURE 1-14
The fork is vulnerable to a knee strike.

pressure can cause extreme discomfort in the fork area. The ideal striking point is the lowest point of the testicle. The angle of attack is 45–90 degrees upward, slamming the testicle against the pelvic bone. The results of a focused strike can include intense pain and nausea in the abdomen; hemorrhaging causing collapse, shock, and unconsciousness; and even death if severe trauma to the testicles occurs.

KNEES

The knee is without a doubt a primary target in close combat for several reasons. First, it is the hardest area to protect. Second, it can be struck effectively at 360 degrees. Third, it destroys movement and support of the body.

The point of impact varies according to your position to the target. The more to the front of the target, the more effect a focus strike will have. Striking the front, against the

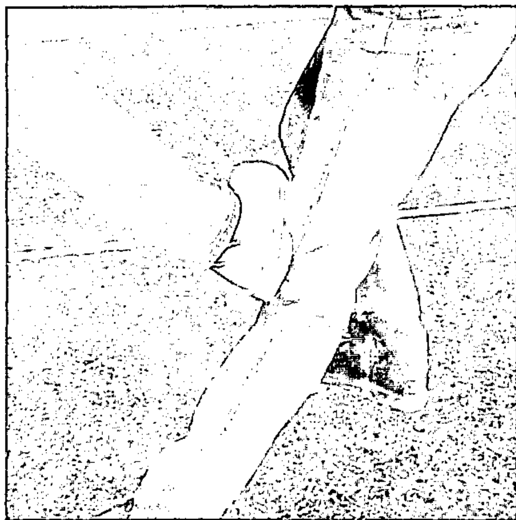


FIGURE 1-15
The knee can be struck from any angle.

movement of the joint, will obviously do more damage than striking the rear of the joint. The weapon is the bottom of the foot, with a stomp kick (Figure 1-15). The result of a focused strike can range from disruption of balance to severe damage to the muscle, tendons, ligaments, and bones of the joint.

Volume II



Stance and Movement

CHAPTER 1

THE GUARD

Zenkutsu-dachi, nekoashi-dachi, kokutsu-dachi, kosa-dachi, naihanchi-dachi. Anyone who has studied the traditional Japanese/Okinawan martial arts will recognize these as some of karate's standard stances. But why so many? Good question, and one that I've asked myself many times. I still remember way back when I spent countless hours trying to perfect these beautiful, but totally unnecessary means of standing. One question that kept popping into my mind during karate training was "Why am I training to perfect these stances that I never use unless I'm performing a kata? I never use them for sparring or self-defense." I guess I should have asked my instructor. But ours is not to ask why, just to do what you're told. After all, he is the master.

Ask yourself this question: "How come none of the contact fighting sports use traditional Oriental martial art stances?" Think about it. These great stances, these pillars of strength, are never used in boxing, Muay Thai, judo, kick-boxing, shootboxing, wrestling, and anything else where

real contact is evident. Why? Because they are very impractical. You simply can't move from them. I'm not just filling space here. I hold an instructor rank in the traditional arts. I've done my homework. These stances are not practical for close combat application.

The guard is simply an adaptation of a Western boxing stance. It is a stance that gives it user adequate protection and extreme mobility for either offensive or defensive purposes. Although it is seldom seen in World War II manuals, it was taught and used during that period. Col. Rex Applegate demonstrated his version of this versatile posture in his 1943 classic, *Kill or Get Killed.* The guard was also taught after the Big One, and continued to be taught throughout the armed services during the Korean War. A good description of this stance can be found in the 1954 publication of FM21-150 (which, I'm told, is an outline of the O'Neil curriculum of close combat). Other versions of the guard can be found in *U.S. Marine Corps Hand-to-Hand Combat* and in John Styers' *Cold Steel* (published by Paladin Press).

Because I believe close combat to be personal, I cannot honestly tell you what the perfect guard is. All I can do is give an example of what I believe one to be, and let you adapt it to your own physical makeup. I have a fairly large training group. And although our posture and movement may look the same, they are definitely quite different. Each one of us has a unique body structure and possesses his own individual range of speed, strength, flexibility, and reaction time. It's up to the individual to learn what his strengths and weaknesses are, and to train accordingly.

The following is a description of the guard that I use and teach. For instructional purposes, this is for a right-handed individual.

GUARD

From a natural stance (feet shoulder-width apart and slightly turned out), take a short step forward with the left foot. Keep your left foot pointing straight to the front. Your right foot should be turned slightly outward to the right. Some instructors advocate turning the rear foot forward. I feel this places unnecessary tension in the leg. Remember, a relaxed body moves faster. Keep your weight evenly distributed between both legs. Bend slightly at the knees and at the waist. This will aid in protecting the abdominal region, lower your center of gravity for better balance, and keep the legs coiled and ready to spring into action. Keep the torso straight and the hips square to the opponent. Hold your hands up next to and in front of the head. Hands are opened and relaxed with the thumbs held upright, not pointing back toward the face. Elbows are down, protecting the chest. Your head is facing the opponent and tilted forward with the



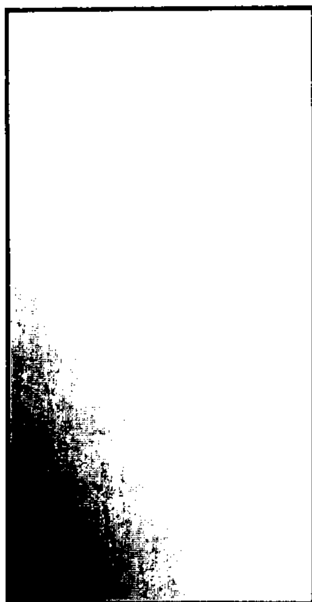


Left: FIGURE 2-1
The guard. Note the almost upright relaxed posture.

Right: FIGURE 2-2
The guard should provide mobillty and protection with offensive capabilities.

chin tucked in. The whole body should be relaxed yet ready to explode into action (Figures 2-1 and 2-2).

When first practicing the guard, follow the above directions step-by-step until you can assume the position with one complete, simultaneous movement. Then increase your speed until the guard is formed with one quick snap of the body. Now repeat the process with the other side. Make snapping into the guard an unconscious muscle memory process.



CHAPTER 2

PASSIVE STANCES

Passive stances are postures that we use all day, every day. And it is in these postures that you will mostly likely be attacked.

Let's face it—we can't walk around all day in the guard stance. The guard is an after-the-fact stance. I see a guy pull a knife or club, I pop into a guard and prepare to fight. I get blindsided, I pop into a guard for protection and counterattack. Other than that, I'll most likely be in a passive stance.

All passive stances have these in common: foot position and body posture. Basically there aren't any. It's however your feet are placed at the time and whichever way your body is facing. What makes them different is your hand and arm position. An old instructor friend of mine taught his students to place their arms/hands in a dominant position. If Joe Blow is holding his down, you may want to fold yours over your chest. If he is folding his over his chest, you may want to have yours up and out in front. No matter where he has his hands, force him to go past yours to get to you.

I choose the following five stances for their passive look, protective posture, and ability to launch effective technique: bodyguard, Jack Benny, Ed Sullivan, the fence, and natural.

BODYGUARD

The bodyguard stance is formed by placing the back of one hand into the palm of the other and hanging them naturally in front of the groin (Figure 2-3).

This stance provides a lot of protection as it covers the groin and torso. It also positions the hands to launch several close-combat strikes, and it is good for clearing garments to gain access to weapons stored on the belt line. My favorite technique from the bodyguard is the chin jab.

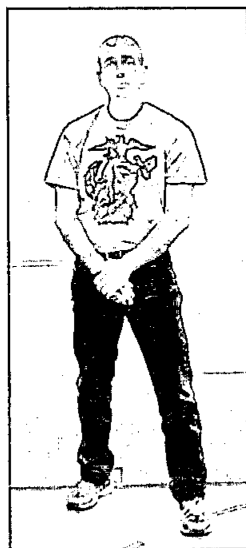


FIGURE 2-3
The bodyguard stance.

JACK BENNY

Close-combat instructor Charles Nelson taught me this stance—among a host of other things. For those of you who are not my age or older, Jack Benny was a famous television comedian in the 1950s and 1960s, who held his arms folded on his chest.

The key to doing this stance correctly is not to cross your arms and interlock your hands inside your elbow joints. All a bad guy has to do is press your outside arm with his left hand and your arms will be momentarily trapped. The next thing that you'll see is a right fist, just a split second before it makes contact with your head.

To form the Jack Benny stance, fold one arm across the chest and lay the other on top of it (Figure 2-4). Now if someone presses your arm, you can slip out the one underneath and counter strike. My favorite strike from the Jack Benny is the edge-hand.



FIGURE 2-4
The Jack Benny stance.

ED SULLIVAN

This is another Charles Nelson stance that I really like. Ed Sullivan was a 1950s and 1960s television show host who also had a signature stance. To form the Ed Sullivan stance, fold one arm across the chest, with the palm of the hand up, and place the other arm with the elbow resting in the palm and hand on the chin. This is also called the police interview stance (Figure 2-5).

This stance provides good protection to the chest, throat, and chin. It also puts the hands in good position to check both high and low attacks. But what I like best about the Ed Sullivan is that it is the perfect pad from which to launch the tiger claw.



FIGURE 2-5
The Ed Sullivan stance.

THE FENCE

I've been using this stance for some time but recently named it "The Fence" after fellow self-defense instructor Geoff Thompson's book of the same name. Geoff was a long-time nightclub doorman and used this type of technique to put away many unruly customers. His book *The Fence* tells how to put a passive barricade between you and the adversary prior to the launch. It is a must read.

The fence is formed by putting both hands out and in front of the chest with the palms down (Figure 2-6) or palms up (Figure 2-7). It positions the hands like a fence that the adversary has to get through, over, under, or around. It also positions the hands for checking blows as well as launching attack weapons. My favorite weapons for the fence are the hammer fist, cupped-hand blow, and the tiger claw.





Left: FIGURE 2-6
The palm-down fence stance.

Right:FIGURE 2-7
The palm-up fence stance.

NATURAL



FIGURE 2-8
The natural stance.

I call this posture the natural stance because that is what it is. This is the stance you'll most likely be in when you're attacked. It's the hand and arm position you're in when you walk, carry luggage or a briefcase, or when you're just standing around smoking a butt. Although it doesn't provide good defensive coverage, it does allow quick access to concealed weapons and is an excellent position from which to launch a variety of techniques (Figure 2-8).

The five passive stances were all chosen for specific reasons. Once you understand their purpose, you'll greatly enhance their use in your close-combat arsenal. Incorporate them in every aspect of your training.

CHAPTER 3

MOVEMENT

"All you have to do is get on your toes. . . . Down on your toes, with your heels off the ground so you can move your body around. Dig your toes in. Let your knees roll. See how easy it is to shift your weight. The important thing to remember is to keep your knees over your toes. Knees over toes. Then you have your balance all the time. On your toes."

—William E. Fairbairn, OSS, 1944

It does not take a genius to understand the importance of the ability to move swiftly and economically in close combat. One simple rearward shuffle to avoid a neck slash from a knife can mean the difference between life and death. Our forefathers knew, practiced, and taught this combative tactic. Earlier, we looked at the guard and how to position the body for protection and mobility. In this section we will look at different types of movement and why each is important.

Movement can be divided into two main categories: stationary and mobile. In stationary movement, the body moves without changing its location. The feet stay planted. The purpose of stationary movement is to have the body positioned for counterattack. On the other hand, mobile movement is movement of the feet. It is when the body changes from one location or direction to another.

ADVANCE AND RETREAT

There are three ways to move from a stationary position: advancing, retreating, and pivoting.

Advancing is primarily an offensive movement. It is used when maximum extension of the body is required to reach the opposition. Stationary advancing requires a simultaneous, forward pushing action of the whole body. In a stationary advance, the pushing action of the rear foot and thigh will leave the leg straight, and up on the ball of the foot. This will place the weight forward, moving the center of gravity over, but not beyond, the front foot. The weapon-side hip, shoulder, and elbow will simultaneously push forward with the rear leg. If done correctly, the movement should result in maximum extension, while maintaining total balance (Figure 2-9).

Stationary advancing should initially be practiced at a moderate speed. Once the movement is perfected, increase the speed gradually until it can be executed with a nontelegraphing, explosive snap.

Retreating is a defensive movement. It is used to pull the body away from an advancing weapon. Stationary retreating is accomplished by executing either an upper or lower retraction of the body.

In a stationary upper-retraction, the pushing action of the front foot and thigh will leave that leg straight and positioned flat on the foot. This will move the weight rearward, placing the center of gravity over, but not beyond, the rear foot. In doing this maneuver the head, shoulders, and elbows are pulled rearward. The purpose of the upper retraction is to avoid a high strike by quickly moving all body parts above the solar plexus away from the advancing weapon without changing location (Figure 2-10).

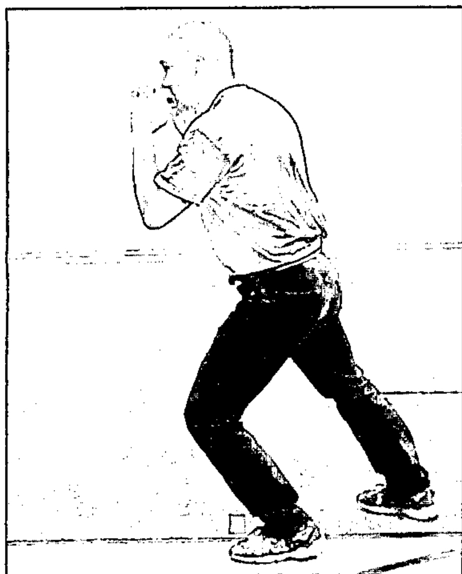


FIGURE 2-9
Mr. White demonstrates an advance with balanced forward commitment.



FIGURE 2-10
The upper retraction pulls the neck and head out of harm's way.



FIGURE 2-11
The lower retraction pulls the midsection away from incoming weapons.

A stationary lower-retraction is executed by the pushing action of both feet and thighs. This movement will leave both legs straight and in the flat-footed position. With this maneuver, the hips are pulled back and the elbows are pulled up and to the sides. The result should simulate the holding of a giant beach ball against and in front of the stomach (Figure 2-11) This movement is also called "hollowing out." The purpose of a stationary lower retraction is to avoid a low strike by quickly moving all body parts below the solar plexus away from the advancing weapon without changing location.

PIVOT

A pivot is a defensive movement used to evade a centerline attack, such as a knife thrust. The stationary pivot is a clockwise or counterclockwise turning of the body while simultaneously executing an upper retraction. Without the retraction, the turning would leave the centerline in place and present a different target to the opposition. The retraction pulls the centerline out of the line of attack (Figures 2-12 and 2-13). Whereas the advance is a forward offensive movement and the retreat an avoiding movement to the rear, the pivot could be defined as a sideways evasive movement.

Mobile movement is a retreat from or an advance on the opposition. This can be accomplished by shuffling, lunging, vaulting, or whirling.



FIGURE 2-12
Pivot left. Note that the arms stay to the front of the body.



FIGURE 2-13
Pivot right. Note how the body is pulled back off of centerline.

SHUFFLE

The shuffle is the most efficient way to move in close combat. It is based on the foot movements of Western bayonet and boxing practice. Shuffling is done by stepping up with the foot that is closer to the direction in which you want to move, followed by the sliding in of the opposite foot to maintain constant foot distance. This movement is also called the "step and slide." If you're positioned in a guard and want to shuffle forward, you would step up with the left foot and slide the right foot in, maintaining the original stance (Figures 2-14 through 2-19). The only thing that changes is your location.



FIGURE 2-14
Mr. White prepares a shuffle forward to change location.



FIGURE 2-15
He steps forward with his lead foot.





Left: FIGURE 2-16
He then slides his rear foot up to maintain his guard.

Right: FIGURE 2-17
Mr. White demonstrates a left shuffle. From the guard . . .





Left: FIGURE 2-18
. . . he steps off to the left with his left foot and . . .

Right: FIGURE 2-19
. . . slides the right foot in to maintain his guard.

Another form of shuffling I practice is called "bulldogging." This is used when you want to apply constant forward pressure. Bulldogging is a violent forward pressure shuffle (Figures 2-20 through 2-22), similar to a football lineman doing sled practice. Dig in and start pushing.



Right: FIGURE 2-20
Mr. White demonstrates "bulldogging" using a John Styers "wheeling elbows" attack.



FIGURE 2-21
Bulldogging teaches continual forward aggressive movement to keep the adversary on the defense.



FIGURE 2-22
Five quick elbow strikes later Mr. Gray is moved back 5–6 feet with a short, powerful, bulldog shuffle.

LUNGE

The lunge is an explosive, gross forward movement used to cover great distances in an instant. A lunge is stepping forward with the forward leg. This is usually done in conjunction with an offensive movement such as tiger claw. A lunge is executed by taking a large step with the forward leg and simultaneously pushing off with the rear leg (Figures 2-23 and 2-24). Depth of lunge is predetermined by the amount of distance to be covered.



FIGURE 2-23
Mr. White demonstrates a lunge. From the guard . . .

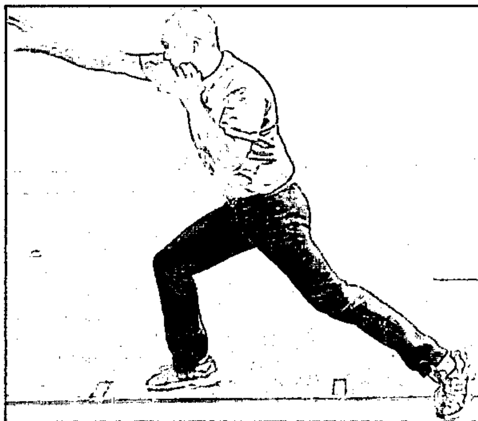


FIGURE 2-24
. . . a large forward step is executed by pushing off with the rear leg. Rear foot can either be slid up to maintain guard or used as weapon. It is moved back 5–6 feet with a short, powerful, bulldog shuffle.

VAULT

A vault is stepping forward with the rear leg. Although this can be used in conjunction with an edge-hand as a strictly offensive movement, it is usually reserved to quickly and offensively close the gap after a defensive movement. Vaults are executed by taking an explosive large step forward with the rear leg (Figures 2-25 and 2-26).

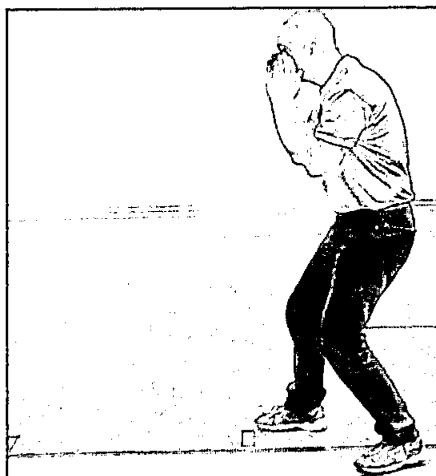


FIGURE 2-25
A large forward step is executed by pushing off with the rear leg. The rear foot can either be slid up to maintain guard or be used as weapon.



FIGURE 2-26
Take a large, explosive step forward with the rear leg. A distance of 4–5 feet can easily be covered when done explosively. The rear leg can now be slid up to maintain guard or be used as a powerful attacking weapon.

WHIRLING

Whirling is a method used to rapidly change direction while still maintaining balance. It will most likely be used for multiple assailant scenarios. Unlike pivoting which keeps the feet stationary, whirling requires the feet to change direction and location as you track the opposition.

Whirling is executed by an explosive turning of the body while moving the feet. The feet are moved by turning on the balls or by stepping up. To whirl left from a guard, step forward with the right foot, and simultaneously turn to the left (Figure 2-27 through 2-29).



FIGURE 2-27
Mr. White sees an attack coming in on his left side. From the guard . . .



FIGURE 2-28
. . . he steps forward to move out of the attack line and . . .



FIGURE 2-29
. . . he whirls left to track his adversary.

The whirl-about is a bayonet technique used to turn 180 degrees. This technique of movement is especially good for attacks from the rear as it quickly moves you out the of line of attack. To whirl-about from a natural stance, take your right foot and step across your front to the left. When your foot hits the ground, turn your body 180 degrees (Figures 2-30 through 2-32).



FIGURE 2-30
Mr. White senses an attack from the rear, moves to guard, and begins to whirl about.



FIGURE 2-31
He cross steps to the left, pulling himself out of the attack line, and starts tracking the threat.



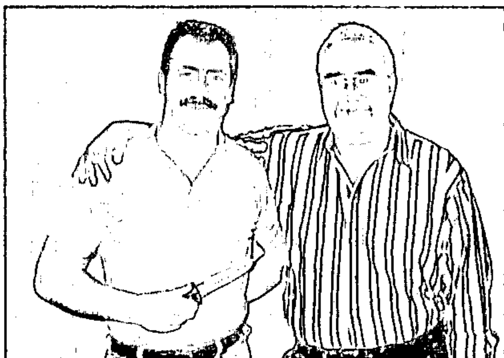
FIGURE 2-32
He whirls about and does target assessment.

The advantage to whirling is that, like pivoting, whirling moves the centerline of the body from its original position. This tactic comes in handy when dealing with multiple assailants because it allows you to swiftly evade an oncoming attack from the side or the rear.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bob Kasper, the late internationally known writer and expert combat instructor, was a former USMC Military Policeman (1969–73) and USAR Cavalry Scout (1981–82). After receiving his first taste of all-out fighting at Parris Island, South Carolina, Bob would devote the rest of his life to training and researching in World War II–era close combat.

His interest in Japanese martial arts training began while he was stationed in Japan for 13 months, where he studied taiho jutsu from a captain in the Japanese defense force. After leaving the Marines, Bob started studying Shito-ryu karate, and after nine years he attained a sandan in karate. He founded the American Karate Jutsu Association and held black belts and instructor ranks in several martial art disciplines. During the late 1970s he studied World War II combatives under Charles Nelson, a well-known Marine Corps close combat instructor from the W.E. Fairbairn/A.E. Sykes/A.J. Biddle era.



Bob Kasper (left), holding his first knife design, the Kasper Fighting Knife, which was handmade by Al Polkowski (right), custom knifemaker.

In 1992, Bob founded the Gung-Ho Chuan Association (GHCA), a brotherhood of Marine Corps veteran close-quarters combat instructors, who research, practice, develop, and teach the form of Western combatives also known as "gutter fighting"—the true essence of close combat. His goal was to produce high-quality instructors and practitioners of close combat. During Bob's combatives career, he was creator and editor of *SNAPPING IN: The Journal of the Gung-Ho Chuan Association.* And in addition to being the Street Smarts editor for *Tactical Knives* magazine for over five years, he also wrote close-combat/knife related articles for *Combat Knives, Modern Knives, Fighting Knives, Full Contact, Guns & Ammo, Soldier of Fortune,* and *Gung-Ho* magazines.

Internationally known for his many knife designs, Bob was an honorary member of The Knifemakers' Guild. He designed 14 Kasper Fighting Knives to complement the successful knife fighting system he developed, called Kni-Com (Knife Combat), a knife-fighting system that utilizes principles, techniques, and tactics from Western military and criminal schools of knife fighting.

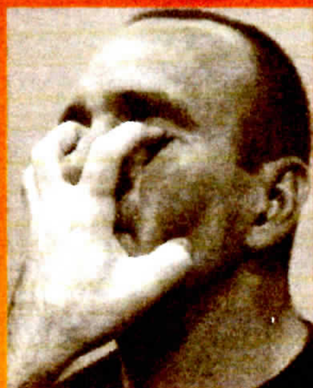
As a close-combat expert and author of the close-combat knife curriculum for the USMC, Bob trained special mission units in the Department of Defense, high-risk



diplomatic security details, and protective security personnel in high-risk environments.

In 2001, a special caucus of the Canadian Society of Arwrologists inaugurated the American Society of Arwrologist (All-Out Hand-to-Hand Fighting), naming Bob as founder and first regent. He was in the process of writing a book incorporating Dr. Perrigard's principles and techniques into the Gung-Ho Chuan Association's Close Combat Program of Instruction when he met his untimely death.

All who had the good fortune to train with Bob will remember his skill in teaching no-nonsense, battlefield-proven, historically correct close-quarter combat techniques with a passionate commitment and mastery of his art. Those who called him friend will forever remember his love of life, and of them.



After World War II, training in hand-to-hand combat stopped abruptly, as interest in the Eastern martial arts blossomed. Convinced that these close-quarter techniques, which had been forged in the streets of Shanghai, China, and tempered in the Pacific and European theaters of war, represented the true essence of close combat, and concerned that they would be lost forever, a handful of men decided to preserve this knowledge. One of these men was Bob Kasper.

Bob Kasper was an avid practitioner of the martial arts for more than 30 years. A student of the late Charles Nelson, Kasper was a former U.S. Marine Corps military policeman and U.S. Army Reserve cavalry scout; director of the Gung-Ho Chuan Association, a brotherhood of Marine Corps veteran close-combat instructors; founder of the American Karate Jutsu Association; and he held black belts and instructor ranks in several martial art disciplines. He wrote these two volumes of *Individual Close Combat Techniques* in 2001–2002 but never published them. The first volume is on principles and tactics while the second volume concentrates on stance and movement. It is great honor for Paladin to offer these two volumes under one cover, with an exclusive new foreword by Kelly McCann, who trained in combatives and knife fighting with Kasper.



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ISBN: 978-1-58160-685-0

